

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENNA 01258 01 OF 02 131251Z

51

ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 DRC-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 TRSE-00 SAI-01 IO-14

OIC-04 AEC-11 OMB-01 /166 W
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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1590

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 1258

FROM US REP MBFR

NOFORN

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: REPORT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN SOVIET AND U.S.

REPS FEBRUARY 12, 1974

1. AT THE REQUEST OF SOVIET REP KHLESTOV, U.S. REP AND DEPREP
HAD LUNCH WITH KHLESTOV AND SMIRNOVSKY ON FEBRUARY 12, 1974.

2. KHLESTOV RAISED PRODECURAL PROPOSAL ADVANCED BY ALLIES ON
FEBRUARY 6. HE SAID THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS AGREED THAT INFORMAL
DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED TO SUPPLEMENT THE PLENARIES
AND TO TRY TO START A DIALOGUE. HE REFERRED TO THE FACT THAT
IN THE PLENARIES THE PARTICIPANTS, PROBABLY INEVITABLY, FOLLOW
THE PRACTICE OF MAKING UNILATERAL STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENNA 01258 01 OF 02 131251Z

POSITIONS, AND THAT A DIALOGUE HAD CONSEQUENTLY NOT DEVELOPED.

IHLESTOV REITERATED HIS SUPPORT FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS MORE THAN ONCE DURING THE LUNCH AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS HAD A STRONG INTEREST IN GETTING A DIALOGUE AS SUCH STARTED.

3. KHLESTOV SAID THAT THE EAST COULD NOT AGREE TO START INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS SOLELY ON THE TOPIC OF SOVIET GROUND FORCE REDUCTIONS. IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO SELECT THIS ONE ASPECT OF THE WESTERN APPROACH AND FOCUS ON IT MERELY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SAME WORDS APPEARED IN BOTH APPROACHES. ONE MIGHT AS WELL ARGUE THE SAME WITH REGARD TO "CEILINGS." THE WEST WANTED A "COMMON CEILING." SUB-CEILINGS WERE IMPLICIT IN THE EASTERN PROPOSAL. SINCE THE IDEA IF NOT THE WORD APPEARED IN BOTH APPROACHES, ONE COULD JUST AS WELL ARGUE THAT THIS WAS A COMMON POINT AND SHOULD BE DISCUSSED. KHLESTOV SAID HE MADE THIS PARALLEL NOT TO SUGGEST DISCUSSION OF CEILINGS, BUT TO INDICATE THAT THE PROPOSED US-SOVIET FORCES TOPIC WAS BASED ON A COINCIDENCE OF WORDS, RATHER THAN BEING A GENUINELY COMMON POINT.

4. U.S. REPS REITERATED THE VALUE OF HAVING AS THE TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AT INFORMAL SOCIAL GATHERINGS SUBJECT MATTER WHICH WAS COMMON TO BOTH SIDES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE A REAL DIALOGUE, AS CONTRASTED TO UNILATERAL PRESENTATIONS OF THE TYPE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PLENARIES AND IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO WIDEN THE AREAS OF COMMONALITY BETWEEN THE TWO APPROACHES. IT WAS NECESSARY TO FIND COMMON GROUND AND TO INTENSIFY DISCUSSION OF IT IN DEPTH RATHER THAN TO WANDER OVER THE SUBJECT MATTER. WE ALREADY KNEW WHERE THE POSITIONS OF BOTH SIDES DIFFERED. IT WOULD BE A WASTE TO USE INFORMAL GATHERINGS TO GO OVER THIS GROUND AGAIN.

5. SOVIET REPS ASSERTED THAT THE APPROACHES OF THE EAST AND WEST WERE NOT IN FACT COMMON WITH RESPECT TO US-SOVIET GROUND FORCE REDUCTIONS, BUT THAT IN ORDER TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF COMMONALITY THE WEST HAD SELECTED ARBITRARILY CERTAIN PARTS OF THE EASTERN PROPOSAL. SOVIET REPS SAID THEY HAD NOT BEEN IMPRESSED BY ALLIED CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING PHASE I. SMIRNOVSKY CLAIMED ALLIED REPS ON FEBRUARY 6 HAD SAID EVEN LESS THAN ALLIES HAD SAID IN PLENARY SESSIONS HERETOFORE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENNA 01258 01 OF 02 131251Z

6. US REPS AGREED THAT THEY HAD ABSTRACTED ELEMENTS FROM EACH SIDE'S PROPOSALS IN ORDER TO FIND GROUNDS OF COMMONALITY. THEY SAID THAT THEY BELIEVED THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE BECAUSE ONCE AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON COMMON ELEMENTS THEN IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO BROADEN THE AREA OF AGREEMENT BY MOVING TO OTHER AREAS. THEY CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT A FOCUS ON US-SOVIET FORCES WOULD BE FRUITFUL. MOVEMENT ON THIS TOPIC WOULD DRAW OTHER TOPICS AFTER IT IN TRAIN. THEY ADDED, HOWEVER, ON

A PURELY PERSONAL BASIS, IF THE TOPIC OF US-SOVIET GROUND
FORCE REDUCTIONS WAS TOO NARROW, THEN BOTH SIDES MIGHT CONSIDER
TOGETHER DEFINING SOMEWHAT BROADER ELEMENTS COMMON TO BOTH PROPOSALS
WHICH WOULD INCLUDE US-SOVIET FORCES. THEY SUGGESTED SPECIFICALLY
CONSIDERATION OF (1) US-SOVIET GROUND FORCE REDUCTIONS,
(2) PHASING AND (3) PARTICIPATION OF OTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANTS.

7. COMMENT: US REP HAD IN MIND THAT SINCE ALLIES WOULD NOT WIHS
TO GO BEYOND WHAT THEY HAD ALREADY SAID ABOUT OTHER DIRECT
PARTICIPANTS,

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 01258 02 OF 02 131313Z

51

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENNA 1258

NOFORN

FROM US REP MBFR

THIS DEFINITION WOULD REALLY AMOUNT IN PRACTICE
TO FOCUS ON US-SOVIET FORCES. END COMMENT.

8. SOVIET REPS LISTENED CAREFULLY TO THIS PRO-

POSAL AND INDICATED SOME INTEREST. HOWEVER, THEY THEN SUGGESTED THAT BOTH SIDES DISCUSS IN TURN ALL ELEMENTS OF EACH SIDE'S PROGRAM. AT THIS POINT THEY EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZED THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF EACH SIDE'S PROPOSAL COULD NOT BE DISCUSSED AT ONCE AND THAT A SELECTION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE.

9. US REPS REITERATED THE VALUE OF CONCENTRATING ON COMMON ELEMENTS AND THE NON-UTILITY OF DIS-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENNA 01258 02 OF 02 131313Z

CUSSING TOPICS ON WHICH THERE WAS WIDE DISAGREEMENT, I.E., AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES. US REPS POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE JUNE 28 COMMUNIQUE THE EAST WOULD RETAIN ITS RIGHT TO RAISE SUBJECTS OF INTEREST AND THAT BY AGREEING TO DISCUSS COMMON ELEMENTS THEY WOULD NOT THEREFORE FOREGO THE RIGHT TO RAISE TOPICS WHICH WERE NOT COMMON AT A LATER DATE.

10. BEGIN NOFORN: AT THIS POINT KHLESTOV SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE IDEA OF DISCUSSION OF COMMON ELEMENTS WAS A STEP FORWARD. PARTICIPANTS SHOULD GO THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROGRAM OF BOTH SIDES AND IDENTIFY THESE COMMON ELEMENTS. HE SUGGESTED AS A TOPIC REDUCTION OF FORCES; THE SUBJECT MATTER TO BE SPLIT BETWEEN THE TOPIC OF REDUCTION OF NATIONAL FORCES AND THE TOPIC OF FOREIGN FORCES. REDUCTION WOULD OF COURSE INCLUDE AIR AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITH WHICH THESE FORCES WERE EQUIPPED. HE PROPOSED THAT EACH OF THESE SUBJECTS MIGHT BE DISCUSSED FOR A PERIOD OF ONE TO THREE WEEKS. IF DESIRED, THIS CYCLE COULD START WITH CONSIDERATION OF FOREIGN FORCES. US REP POINTED OUT ALLIES DID NOT USE THIS NOMENCLATURE AND THAT THEIR SUGGESTION SEEMED CLOSER TO THE ACTUAL SUBJECT MATTER.

11. US REP ASKED IF KHLESTOV MEANT BY SUGGESTING THAT THE DISCUSSION MIGHT START WITH FOREIGN FORCES UNDER THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF COMMON ELEMENTS THAT THE DISCUSSION MIGHT THEREFORE FOCUS ON FOREIGN GROUND FORCES. HE POINTED OUT THAT AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES WERE NOT A COMMON ELEMENT.

12. KHLESTOV THEN SUGGESTED A SECOND ALTERNATE SOLUTION, NAMELY, THAT THE TOPIC REDUCTION OF FORCES BE SPLIT INTO FOUR SUBJECTS, NAMELY, FOREIGN FORCES, NATIONAL FORCES, GROUND FORCES, AND AIR AND NUCLEAR

FORCES. HE SUGGESTED TWO SESSIONS BE HELD PER WEEK ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS AND THAT EACH TOPIC BE DISCUSSED IN TURN, ALLOCATING TWO MEETINGS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENNA 01258 02 OF 02 131313Z

PER TOPIC.

13. US REPS SAID THAT THEY STILL THOUGHT THAT THE EFFORT SHOULD BE TO FIND COMMON ELEMENTS. THE TOPICS WHICH THEY HAD SUGGESTED MORE CLEARLY FIT THE CONCEPT OF COMMON ELEMENTS.

14. KHLESTOV REPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE WILLING TO CONSIDER DISCUSSING FOREIGN FORCES, NATIONAL FORCES, AND PHASING AS EXAMPLES OF TOPICS WITH COMMON ELEMENTS, BUT THAT THEY WOULD INSIST ON INCLUDING AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES WHEN THEY DISCUSSED FOREIGN AND NATIONAL FORCES. US REPS OBJECTED TO INCLUSION OF AIR AND NUCLEAR AND STRESSED COMMON ELEMENTS POINT.

15. KHLESTOV REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INFORMAL DISCUSSION GROUP WAS IMPORTANT. END NOFORN.

16. US REPS HAD TO TERMINATE THE DISCUSSION AT THIS POINT. BEFORE LEAVING THEY SAID THAT ALLIES WOULD PROBABLY DESIRE, AT THE DINNER SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 13, TO AGAIN PRESENT THEIR VIEWS AS TO WHY US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES WAS THE APPROPRIATE COMMON TOPIC ON WHICH TO COMMENCE DISCUSSIONS. THEY WOULD REFLECT ON THE COMMENTS THE SOVIETS HAD EXPRESSED BUT URGED THE SOVIETS TO CONSIDER MERITS OF TAKING COMMON GROUND AND ESPECIALLY US-SOVIET FORCES AS SUBJECT MATTER FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSION.

17. BEGIN NOFORN: KHLESTOV STRESSED THAT HIS TWO PROCEDURAL PROPOSALS WERE PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS ONLY, BUT ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE EAST. HE REQUESTED THAT THEY BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. END NOFORN.

18. IN RESPONSE TO US REP'S QUESTION, KHLESTOV SUGGESTED THAT US REPS SELECT WHICH OF THE EASTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO INVITE TO THE DINNER IN ADDITION
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 VIENNA 01258 02 OF 02 131313Z

TO THE SOVIETS. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT
THE GDR REP WAS ABSENT. ACCORDINGLY, THE US REP
SAID HE WOULD INVITE THE POLISH AND CZECH REPS
AGAIN.

19. KHLESTOV SAID THAT SOVIET OFFICIAL
ABRASIMOV HAD VISITED VIENNA THE PREVIOUS DAY
(FEBRUARY 12). HE DID NOT SAY FOR WHAT PURPOSE. HUMES

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